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THE JEWS OF NEW ENGLAND
(OTHER THAN RHODE ISLAND)
PRIOR TO 1800

BY

LEON HÜHNER, A. M., LL. B.

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THE JEWS OF NEW ENGLAND (OTHER THAN RHODE ISLAND) PRIOR TO 1800.

BY LEON HÜHNER, A. M., LL. B.

The Puritan Revolution in England had awakened a keen interest in the Jewish race and this interest was powerfully reflected in early New England history. It is in Massachusetts that this tendency was most strongly exhibited. Hebrew was carefully taught at Harvard College,¹ and the restoration of the Jews was one of the most popular topics.

In 1649 Eliot, the missionary, announced that the Indians were of Hebrew origin.² In the following year Downam issued an appeal to Englishmen for contributions to Indian missions, on the plea that those of New England were of Jewish descent.³ When in 1650 Thorowgood published his "Jews in America," Eliot of Massachusetts at once proclaimed that the 37th chapter of Ezekiel principally applied "to the Indians as such Jews," and stated that the New England churches were the "preface to the New Heavens."⁴

¹ Joseph B. Felt. *Ecclesiastical History of New England*. Boston, 1862. Vol. 2, p. 10. Under date February 1, 1649, President Dunster of Harvard, wrote to London concerning the remarkable proficiency of the students of his college in translating Hebrew and Chaldee into Greek. (See Belknap MSS.)

² *Felt's Ecclesiastical History &c.* Vol. 2, p. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴ *Ibid.* Vol. 2, p. 22. It is curious to note also the strange arguments employed to prove the Indians of Jewish origin. Thus in connection with the settlement of Salem, in 1626, we read that it was called by the Indians "Nahum Keike." White says "the opinion is held by some that Indians might formerly have had some intercourse with the Jews. Howsoever it be, it falls out that the name of the place which our late colony hath chosen for their seat, proves it to be perfect

When in 1650 great mortality occurred among the colonists, it was supposed to be the preparation for the calling of the Jews.¹ This subject engrossed the leading minds, and Roger Williams, sending a pamphlet on the subject to Winthrop in 1654, says: "I pray you to read this Jew."² By 1665 the view was generally held, in Massachusetts at least, "that the outcasts of Israel were about to be gathered together,"³ and the great number of works published on that topic at that period in Massachusetts alone is simply amazing.⁴

The same influence was also reflected in the governmental history of Massachusetts.⁵ Already in 1634 Cotton presented to the General Court a code of laws called "Draft of

Hebrew, being called Nahum Keike, by interpretation 'The Bosom of Consolation.'" Cotton Mather also says: "Of which place I have also somewhere met with an odd observation that the name of it was rather Hebrew than Indian, for Nahum signifies comfort and Keik means a Haven, and our English not only found it a haven of comfort but happened also to put a Hebrew name upon it for they called it Salem, for the peace they had and hoped in it and so it is called unto this day."

See *Chronicles of the First Planters of the Colony of Mass. Bay, from 1623-1636*, by Alexander Young, Boston, 1846, p. 12, where other authorities on this subject are collected.

¹*Felt's Ecclesiastical History*, &c. Vol. 2, p. 23. See also *Wonder Working Prov.*, p. 205-6.

²*The Winthrop Papers*. Collections of Massachusetts Historical Society. Vol. 36. (Vol. 6, 4th Series), p. 291.

³*Felt's Ecclesiastical History*, &c. Vol. 2, p. 369. Increase Mather alone opposed this view, claiming that "the time had not yet come." His discourses on the subject were published at London in 1669, under the title of "The Mystery of Israel's Salvation."

⁴Prominently among these may be mentioned "Jews in America" by John Eliot, London, 1660.

⁵*Felt's Ecclesiastical History*, &c. Vol. 1, p. 262.

the Model of Moses his Judicials,"¹ and in 1658 Plymouth seems to have expressly adopted the Jewish code as a model.²

The New England Puritans followed the events leading up to the resettlement of the Jews in England with keen interest. If it be permitted to digress, attention might be called to an item in that connection, which is interesting because it evidently does not refer to Mannassah ben Israel. In 1653 John Haynes writes to Winthrop "that the Jews from Hungaria have sent to England for safe convoy for their great Rabbi Abraham to come thither to consult before their next meeting and it is granted."³

Despite all this general interest in the Jews, the earliest reference to a Jew in Massachusetts is coupled with a direction for him to leave the colony.⁴ The attitude of the New England Puritan on the subject of religious liberty is strikingly brought out in a letter written in 1645 by Winslow of Plymouth to Governor Winthrop. It shows, however, that universal tolerance had been the subject of a heated debate in the legislature and had powerful adherents. Winslow writes as follows: "I utterly abhorred it as such as would make us odious to all Christian commonweales." This document proposed "to allow and maintaine full and free toleracon of religion to all men that would preserve the civill peace and submit unto government and there was no limitacon or excepcon against Turke, Jew, Papist or any other. But our Governor and divers of us having expressed that sad consequences would

¹ Justin Winsor. *The Memorial History of Boston*. Boston, n. d. Vol. 1, p. 125, 145.

² *Felt's Ecclesiastical History*, &c. Vol. 2, p. 236. See also Plym. Col. Laws.

³ *The Winthrop Papers*. Collection of Mass. Historical Society, 1865. Vol. 37. (Vol. 7, 4th Series), p. 464.

⁴ *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay*, &c., edited by Nathaniel B. Shurtleff. (Printed by Order of the Legislature), Boston, 1853. Vol. II, p. 273. Vol. III, p. 159-160.

follow the governor would not suffer it to come to vote, as being that indeed would eate out the power of godliness. . . . By this you may see that all the troubles of New England are not at the Massachusetts. The Lord in mercy looke upon us, and allay this spirit of division that is creeping in amongst us.”¹

The earliest reference to a Jew in Massachusetts appears under date May 3, 1649, and refers to Solomon Franco, the Jew. “The court doth allow the said Solomon Franco 6 shillings per week out of the treasury for 10 weeks for subsistence till he can get his passage into Holland so as he do so within that time.”² Another entry dated May 9, 1649, recites almost the same fact.³

It is therefore improbable that Jews had settled in Massachusetts earlier than 1649. The pronouncedly Jewish names like those of Joseph Isaack⁴ and his sister Rebecca Isaack⁵ which appear between 1634 and 1636 may have belonged to Jews who had become converts in Europe or perhaps to persons of merely Jewish origin. In 1679 we find reference

¹ *Felt's Ecclesiastical History, &c.* Vol. 1, p. 551-2.

² *Records of Massachusetts* (Shurtleff), supra. Vol. II, p. 273.

³ *Ibid.* Vol. III, pp. 159, 160. “Solomon Franché the Jew.” See also *Felt's Ecclesiastical History, &c.* Vol. 2, p. 11.

⁴ *Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston.* Vol. 29, p. 137. Also *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, edited by N. B. Shurtleff, M. D., Boston, 1853. Vol. 1, pp. 372, 342, 220. Also Lucius R. Paige, *History of Cambridge, Mass.*, Boston, 1877, pp. 35, 592. Also *The Register Book of the Lands and Houses in the “New Towne” & the Town of Cambridge.* Cambridge (1896). The name appears frequently and with different spellings, as Isaac, Isaak, Isaacke, &c.

⁵ *Collections of the Mass. Historical Society.* Vol. 30 (Vol. 10, 3d Series), Boston, 1839, p. 141. “A note of the names of all the passengers which tooke shippinge in the Elizabeth, of Ipswich, bound for New England the last of Aprill, 1634. Rebecca Isaacke, 36 years.”

made to a suit in the County Court of Boston against Sarah Franks,¹ and in 1680 Samuel Isaac is mentioned.²

Before the end of the 17th century several Jews are mentioned as residing as such in Massachusetts. Some valuable pioneer work in this connection has been done by Dr. Cyrus Adler, whose notes were published in "The Menorah" about 1888. In his article Dr. Adler called attention to Frazier or Frazon, the Jew whom Cotton Mather tried to convert,³ and to Simon, the Jew who became a Christian in 1702.⁴

¹ "Joseph Rock plff. agt. Sarah Ffrancks widdow." *Records of the Court of Assistants of the Colony of Mass. Bay, 1630-1692.* (Boston, 1901), pp. 142, 180.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 173-4. In 1683 one Joseph Simons is mentioned, but nothing to indicate his race. See The Register Book of Lands &c. in Cambridge (1896), p. 163.

³ *Sources of American Jewish History*, edited by Cyrus Adler. 5 Menorah, p. 256. It seems that Cotton Mather resorted to some unscrupulous device in this attempted conversion. In the words of Samuel Sewell, a contemporary: "The forgery was so plainly detected that Mr. C. M. confest it, after which Mr. Frasier would never be persuaded to hear any more of Xianity." See *Diary of Samuel Sewell*, reprinted in Collections of the Mass. Hist. Soc. Vol. 5, 5th Series. Boston, 1878.

See also "A Modest Inquiry into the Grounds & Occasion of a late Pamphlet Intituled 'A Memorial of the Present Deplorable State of New England by a Disinterested Hand. London, 1707.'" Reprinted in Col. of Mass. Hist. Soc. Vol. 6, 5th Series, 1879, p. 80.

"Feb. 4, 1703/4. Joseph Frazon the Jew dyes at Mr Majors. . . . Feb. 5, Satterday, is carried in Simson's coach to Bristow, from thence by water to Newport where there is a Jews Burying place." *Diary of Samuel Sewell*, reprinted in Vol. 6, 5th Series of Mass. Hist. Soc. Col., p. 9.

⁴ "Sr. 13, 1702, Lords Day. Mr. Bradstreet baptiseth Simon the Jew at Charlestown, a young man whom he was instrumental to convert. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

Since this paper was written, Rev. G. A. Kohut has kindly called my attention to the fact that Simon the Jew assumed the name of Barns, as appears by the following: "1702, Baptized Sept. Mr. Simon (quondam Judeus) Barns." *Records*

Among the inhabitants of Boston in 1695 the records mention Samuell the Jew¹ and one Raphaell Abandana.² In 1699 appears Isaac De Coster,³ whose sons Isaac and Joseph De Coster figure frequently in colonial records.⁴ There is nothing, however, to indicate his race.

The Puritan divines were always interested in the conversion of Jews, and Cotton Mather, writing to Winthrop in 1716, gives a detailed account of a reported wholesale conversion of Jewish children in Berlin.⁵

The most interesting of the early Jewish converts in New England was Judah Monis, who became a Christian in 1722, and for 40 years was instructor at Harvard. The detail of his career will be omitted here, as it has been written up by Rev. George A. Kohut, Mr. Lebowich and others.⁶ I desire, however, to call attention to part of the inscription on his tombstone at Northborough, which refers to his Jewish origin, and has not been noted before. It reads:

“A native branch of Jacob see,
Which once from off its olive broke,
Regrafted from the living tree,
Of the reviving sap partook

of the First Church in Charlestown, Mass., 1632-1789. Boston, 1880, p. 97. Also “Mr. Barnes (quondam Judeus), bapt. Aug. 30, 1702.” *The Genealogies and Estates of Charlestown, Mass.,* by Thomas Bellows Wyman, Boston, 1879, p. 60. This item Mr. Kohut obtained from Rev. Louis Meyer of Hopkinton, Iowa.

¹ *First Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston,* 1876. Boston, 1881, *List of Inhabitants of Boston in 1695*, p. 164.

² *Ibid.*, p. 158.

³ He may have been a Jew. He married a Christian lady and their children were in all likelihood Christians. See *Report of the Record Commissioners, &c.*, Boston, 1883. Vol. 9, p. 250.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, p. 299. Vol. 21, pp. 203, 255. Vol. 29, pp. 243, 319.

⁵ *The Mather Papers.* Collections of Mass. Hist. Soc., 1868. Vol. 38 (Vol. 8, 4th Series), p. 420.

⁶ G. A. Kohut in *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*. Vol. XIV, pp. 217-26. Vol. XV, p. 56 &c. Joseph Lebowich in *Jewish Comment*, Baltimore.

From teeming Zion's fertile womb,
As dewy drops in early morn,
Or rising bodies from the tomb,
At once be Israel's nation born."¹

In 1732 mention is made of Joseph Simpson and Hannah Miers, of Boston,² and in 1733 of Isaac Solomon, whose proposed marriage to Mary Todd was forbidden by the clergyman.³

Between 1740 and the Revolution only four persons were naturalized in the Superior Court of Boston; one of these was Aaron Lopez,⁴ a Jew, described as "a native of Swansea in the County of Bristol, merchant, Jew, formerly residing at Newport from 1752 to 1762 and at said Swansea since."⁵ Lopez was one of the most prominent merchants of New England, and an appreciative account of him may be found in Washburn's *History of Leicester*,⁶ and more re-

¹ *Historical Collections, &c.*, by John Warner Barber, Worcester, 1841, p. 590. Monis died in 1764 aged 81.

² It is doubtful whether they were Jews. See *Report of the Record Commissioners*, Boston, 1885. Vol. 13, p. 220.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 28, p. 220.

⁴ *Collections of Mass. Hist. Soc.* (1858-60). Vol. 4, p. 342.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

⁶ Emory Washburn. *Historical Sketches of the Town of Leicester, Mass.*, Boston, 1860, pp. 120, 121, 124. "Mr. Lopez was one of the merchant princes of his day. His estate inventoried at about \$100,000, and indicated by the character of the furniture and family stores on hand, a style of living not common at that day in this country. Washburn's *Brief sketch of the History of Leicester Academy*. Boston, 1855, pp. 7, 8. Also *Mass. H. S. Col.*, Vol. 11, p. 11. Also Daly, *History of the Settlement of the Jews in North America*, N. Y., 1893, pp. 76-9, 82, 83, 85, 86.

See also *The Worcester (Mass.) Magazine and Historical Journal*, edited by Wm. Lincoln & C. C. Baldwin, Worcester, 1823, Vol. 2, pp. 78, 90, 91.

cently in an interesting paper prepared by Hon. N. Taylor Phillips.¹

In 1756 mention is made of Benjamin Brandon, author of poetical and political essays, though there is nothing to indicate his race.²

In the correspondence of prominent men of Massachusetts, members of the Franks family are frequently mentioned. They were the great traders of their day.³ David Franks is repeatedly referred to in the Aspinwall papers between 1760 and 1769.⁴ Hoops, writing to General Monckton, refers to an exclusive grant of land on the Ohio made to "David Franks, Joseph Symonds (Simons), Levy Andrew Levy" and others.⁵ Watts, writing to Monckton during the French and Indian War, thus refers to Jacob Franks: "Jack Franks has your papers, votes, speeches and addresses."⁶ Quite a few such references appear,⁷ and on February 4, 1769, Watts, writing to Monckton concerning the death of mutual friends, says: "Father Franks has been obliged to bow to four score years and better and is just gone."⁸

Under date May 18, 1762, the Boston records state that

¹ *Jewish Comment*, Baltimore, Oct. 18, 1901.

The venerable Andrew H. Green has told the present writer that on his estate at Worcester are trees planted by Aaron Lopez.

² *Collections of the Mass. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 3, Boston, 1810, p. 300. "A list of writers who were citizens of Boston."

³ In fact a town seems to have been named for them, Franks Town near Fort Du Quesne mentioned in Niles' *History of the French and Indian War*. See *Col. of the Mass. Hist. Soc.*, 1861. Vol. 35 (Vol. 5, 4th Series), p. 428.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1871. Vol. 39 (Vol. 9, 4th Series), pp. 319, 341.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1871. Vol. 40 (Vol. 10, 4th Series), p. 606.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 502.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 504.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 603. Jacob Franks, died at New York, January 16, 1769. See *Record Book of Shearith Israel Congregation* (MSS.), p. 62.

"the selectmen are informed that one Isaac Moses, a Jew, has lately come to town."¹ This is one of the earliest references to that well-known Revolutionary patriot, who subsequently became one of the foremost members of the New York Chamber of Commerce.²

The most prominent Jew of Boston prior to the Revolution was Moses Michael Hays, concerning whom a most interesting paper might be written. He lived in Boston years before the struggle, and was in correspondence with many prominent characters.³ Thus in 1770 James Rivington, the New York publisher, writes to him, addressing him throughout as "My dear Moses," and discussing the rebellious attitude of the colonists.⁴ Hays was a man of means, and we find his bond for the newly elected town treasurer accepted without question by the selectmen in 1790.⁵ His name appears in the Boston Directory for 1789⁶ and 1796.⁷

¹ *Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston.* Boston, 1887, Vol. 19, p. 195. Isaac Moses is identified with New York. During the Revolution he was one of the patriotic citizens who advanced monies to the cause. On his removal to Philadelphia he materially assisted Robert Morris. He was one of the founders of the Philadelphia Congregation, and one of the leading members of the New York Chamber of Commerce.

² Of his prominence in the New York Chamber of Commerce mention is made in Grant Wilson's *Memorial History of the City of New York*, N. Y., 1893. Vol. 4, p. 538.

³ See letter from Elias Boudinot to Moses Hays of Boston. Vol. 7, *Bailey-Myers Collection* (MSS. at Lenox Library, N. Y.), No. 611. Also letter from General Glover, *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, No. 51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, No. 688.

⁵ *Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston.* Vol. 27, p. 129.

As to his prominence as a merchant, see also Justin Winsor's *Memorial History of Boston*, Vol. 4, p. 200.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Boston, 1886. Vol. 10, p. 187. M. M. Hays: Insurance Office, State St.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 254. In 1790 his household is described as follows: 2 white males, 2 white males under 16, 11 white females, 2 other free persons, no slaves. See *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 445.

In connection with the general distress incident upon the shutting up of Boston harbor we find the name of a New York Jew. A shipment of corn had been sent by Virginia for the relief of Boston. This was sold and letters from Samuel Adams and John Hancock acknowledge receipt of the proceeds in the form of a bill of exchange drawn by Sampson Mears on Isaac Moses, of New York.¹ Jona. De Costa is mentioned as a patriot citizen in 1775.²

Quite a number of patriot Jews removed from Newport in 1777 after that city had fallen into the hands of the British, and settled at Leicester, Massachusetts. Including their servants they numbered about seventy souls and embraced members of the Lopez, Rivera and Mendes families. An appreciative account of these Jews may be found in Washburn's History and other New England works.³

The most prominent Jew in the Massachusetts line during

¹ *Collections of the Mass. Historical Society, Boston, 1858.* Vol. 34 (Vol. 4, 4th Series), p. 84. See also letter from Isaac Van Dam to John Hancock. *Ibid.*, pp. 190-1.

² *Report of the Record Commissioners, &c.* Vol. 29, p. 328.

³ Emory Washburn. *Historical Sketch of the Town of Leicester, Mass.* Boston, 1860. Also *The Worcester (Mass.) Magazine and Historical Journal*, edited by Wm. Lincoln and C. C. Baldwin, Worcester, 1826, pp. 78, 90, 91, where the writer says: "They always observed the rites and ceremonies of their law and their stores were closed from Friday until Monday morning. They were prudent, industrious and enterprising and many of them were elegant in their address and deportment and possessed an extensive knowledge of the world. They were always respected and esteemed by the inhabitants of the town and always seemed to remember with pleasure the kindness and civility they on their part received while residents there and availed themselves ever afterwards of every opportunity that presented to express these feelings, as many who experienced their attentions when in Newport would attest."

The following curious example of the orthodoxy of these Jews is likewise given in the same publication: "A child of one of the families having one day tasted some pork in one of the neighbors' houses, its mother immediately upon learning

the Revolution was Isaac Franks. His career has been written up by Professor Jastrow,¹ and a detailed record of his military career may be found in the last volume of the Society's publications.²

Among the Jewish residents of Boston between 1790 and 1798, besides those already referred to, were Judah Hays,³ Isaac Solomon⁴ and Abraham Solis, the latter being de-

the fact, administered a powerful emetic and thus cast out the sin of which it had been unconsciously guilty."

The following is from Washburn's *History of Leicester*, p. 123.

"Though without a place of assembly for worship here, they rigidly observed the rites and requirements of their own laws, keeping Saturday as holy time, but out of regard to the sentiments of the people among whom they were settled, carefully kept their stores closed from Friday until Monday morning of each week."

"Though differing from their neighbors in matters of religious faith, they won the confidence and esteem of all by their upright and honorable dealing, the kindness and courtesy of their intercourse and the liberality and public spirit which they evinced as citizens."

"They remained here until the ratification of peace in 1783, when with the exception of Mr. Lopez, they returned to Newport, carrying with them the respect and kind regard of a community with which they had been intimately associated for six years."

The most influential of these Jews was Aaron Lopez, above referred to. His house subsequently became the Leicester Academy. He was drowned, May 20, 1782. Of him a contemporary paper says: "He was a merchant of eminence, of polite and amiable manner. Hospitality and benevolence were his true characteristics. An ornament and a valuable pillar in the Jewish society of which he was a member. His knowledge in commerce was unbounded and his integrity irreproachable. Thus he lived & thus he died, much regretted, esteemed and loved by all. See Washburn's *History, &c.*, p. 124.

¹ Vol. 5, *Amer. J. H. Soc. Publications*, p. 7, &c.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, pp. 168-170. Note by the present writer, and authorities cited.

³ *Report of the Record Com. of the City of Boston*. Vol. 22, p. 68 (1798).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 479.

scribed as "Interpreter of Foreign Languages."¹ In connection with Salem prior to 1800 mention is made of Joseph Franks.²

Leaving Massachusetts, we find Connecticut next in importance. Connecticut had a singularly homogeneous society and framed the strictest code of laws of any in New England; laws that continued in force longer in that colony and were more effective there as well. Strangely enough, however, although these very "Blue Laws" provided that "no food or lodging could be given to a Quaker, Adamite or other heretic,"³ Jews settled there at a very early period and even obtained an express sanction for their residence.

The earliest reference to a Jew in Connecticut is an entry dated November 9, 1659, reciting that a fine of 20 shillings has been imposed on David the Jew.⁴ A recent work by the President of the Connecticut Historical Society fixes that entry as early as 1650.⁵ The first mention of Jews in numbers, however, appears in the Hartford Town Records, February 11, 1660, stating "that there remains in John Allyns hands 10 shillings for the Jews."⁶ This entry is followed by

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 283. See also *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 469.

² *Collections of the Essex Institute*, Vol. 4, p. 5. (*An Account of Salem Common*, by B. F. Brown.)

³ William B. Weedon. *Economic and Social History of New England*, Boston, 1890. Vol. 1, p. 223.

⁴ *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, edited by J. Hammond Trumbull, Hartford, 1850. Vol. 1, p. 343. Weedon's *History*, Vol. 1, p. 200.

Joseph B. Felt. *Ecclesiastical History of New England*. Boston, 1862. Vol. 2, p. 265.

⁵ J. Hammond Trumbull. *The Memorial History of Hartford County, Conn.* Boston, 1886. Vol. 1, p. 321.

⁶ *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*. Hartford, 1897. Vol. VI, p. 133:

"There remaineth in Dan Prats hand due to the Towne. 2—6—2
More in John Allyns hand for the Jews 0—10—0
paid to Mr. Joⁿ Alen for a debt ye Tone owed him formly."

another under date September 2, 1661: "The same day ye Jews which at present live in John Marsh his house have liberty to sojourn in ye town for 7 months."¹ They probably continued to reside there, for mention is made of them subsequently, although strangely enough Hartford had no synagogue prior to 1847.²

In 1670 Jacob Lucena was tried at Hartford and fined £20, "to be imprisoned until the fine is paid and immediately on his discharge to leave the colony."³ His offense was probably Sabbath-breaking, for a subsequent entry recites that "upon the humble petition and submission of Jacob Lucena the Court see cause considering he is a Jew to show him what favor they may and abate 10 pounds of his fine."⁴ Lucena, however, obtained the influence of the well-known New York burgher, Asser Levy, in his behalf, and an entry in the Hartford Records, 1671, informs us that "upon the petition of Mr. Assur Levy, this Court see fit to cause to abate five pownds of Jacob Lucenoe's fine as a token of their respect to the sayd Mr. Assur Levy."⁵

Jews figure repeatedly as litigants in the Connecticut rec-

¹ *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*. Hartford, 1897. Vol. VI, p. 135. Hartford Town Votes September 2, 1661: "The same day ye Jewes wch at prsent live in Jo^a Marsh his house, haue liberty to soiorne in ye Towne for seaven months." See also J. H. Trumbull, *The Memorial History of Hartford County, Conn.* Vol. 1, p. 422. Also *Connecticut Historical Collections*, by John Warner Barber, New Haven, n. d., p. 46.

² Trumbull's *Memorial History*, &c. Vol. 1, p. 422.

³ *Colonial Records of Connecticut*. Vol. 2, p. 144. (October 11, 1670.)

Also *Records of the Court of Assistants* (1669-1701), p. 7.

⁴ *Colonial Records of Connecticut*. Vol. 2, (1665-1677), p. 144. Hartford Court, 1670.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 154. See also paper on Asser Levy; *A Noted Jewish Burgher of New Amsterdam*, by the present writer in No. 8, A. J. H. S. Pub., p. 9, &c.

ords during the early portion of the 18th century. In this way we meet Moses Levy¹ and Isaac De Medina in 1723,² Jacob Franks,³ Abraham Pinto⁴ and Asser Levy, the son of the New York worthy, in 1724,⁵ and Isaac Jacobs in 1725.⁶ These early Jews did not all reside in the same town, but curiously enough were scattered throughout the colony. Thus Abraham Pinto is described as a resident of Stratford,⁷ De Medina of Hartford,⁸ and Isaac Jacobs of Brandford.⁹ In 1728, however, De Medina in a suit over a bond of £1000 is described as a resident of New York.¹⁰ A grant of land to David Jacobs is recorded in 1708.¹¹ Jacob Franks figures as a litigant in Connecticut as late as 1750.¹²

The Isaacs family, while not Jews, are repeatedly referred to as of Jewish descent. Its members, particularly Samuel, Benjamin, Isaac and Ralph Isaacs, figure prominently in Colonial annals from 1748 to the close of the Revolution.¹³

¹ *Colonial Records of Connecticut*. Vol. (1717-1725), p. 423.

² *Ibid.* Also in 1725. See *Ibid.*, pp. 576, 577. Again James Poisson vs. Isaac Demedina, May, 1728. *Ibid.*, Vol. 7 (1726-35), p. 188. See also p. 255.

³ October, 1724. *Ibid.*, Vol. (1717-1725), p. 488.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 488, and in 1725. *Ibid.*, p. 577.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 488, 576, 577.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 548, 577.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 577.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 577.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 548, 577.

¹⁰ *Colonial Records of Connecticut*. Vol. 7 (1726-35), p. 202.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. (1706-10), p. 60.

¹² At that time however he is described as a resident of New York. See *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 544 (1744-1750).

¹³ (Samuel.) *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 362. Vol. 10, p. 123. (Benjamin.) *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 552. Vol. 12, pp. 417, 558. Vol. 13, p. 182. (Isaac.) *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 472. Vol. 11, p. 99. (Ralph.) *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 306, Vol. 11, p. 533. Vol. 12, pp. 69, 643. Vol. 13, pp. 34, 143, 208, 257, 310. Vol. 14, pp. 66, 155, 321. The Isaacs family belongs to Norwalk. References to Ralph Isaacs, who was a prominent Tory, are so frequent that his name may be found

Judah Hays, of New York, is mentioned as a litigant at Fairfield in 1747 and 1749.¹ Isaac Solomons, a Jew of Middleton, figures in 1748 in connection with his petition regarding the duty on certain goods imported by him from London.² Hulda Levi is mentioned at Guilford in 1772.³

Mr. Kohut has heretofore called attention to the fact that Ezra Stiles in his diary under date 1760 says that "on inquiry it seems there are no Jews in Connecticut," and in 1762 he mentions the absence of Jews in Bristol and New Haven.⁴

Even as late as 1772 when Stiles mentions the arrival from the West Indies of a Jewish family at New Haven, he says: "They are the first real Jews at that place with the exception of the two Jew brothers Pinto who renounced Judaism and all religion. Should there hereafter be a synagogue in New Haven it must be dated from this."⁵

in the index of almost any work dealing with Connecticut Revolutionary History. See also *A Historical Collection from Official Records of the Part Sustained by Connecticut During the War of the Revolution*. Compiled by Royal R. Hinman, Hartford, 1842, pp. 302, 404.

The Jewish origin of Ralph Isaacs is referred to in *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History*. Vol. II, May, 1745-May, 1763, by Franklin Bowditch Dexter, M. A. N. Y., 1896, pp. 233, 699. Also Note by Dr. Cyrus Adler in 6 *Am. J. H. S. Publ.*, p. 151-3.

¹ *Colonial Records of Connecticut*. Vol. 9 (1744-50), p. 483.

² *Ibid.*, p. 522.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 659. (1768-72.)

⁴ *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, edited with notes, by F. B. Dexter. 3 vols. N. Y., 1901. See also *Ezra Stiles and the Jews*, by Rev. G. A. Kohut. N. Y., 1902, pp. 109, 110.

Under date January 6, 1762, Stiles writes: "I learn in conversation with Capt. Jno. Nichols that there are no Jews in New Haven." A similar statement appears in 1763 on the authority of his father-in-law, Dr. Hubbard.

⁵ *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*. Vol. I, pp. 283-4 (Itinerary). See Mr. Kohut's *Ezra Stiles and the Jews*, p. 109-10. The family referred to came originally from Venice.

Stiles' statement was certainly inaccurate, for besides the references already given,¹ there seems to have been quite a number of Jewish residents at Norwalk as early as 1760. The most prominent of these was Michael Judah, who figures as a litigant in the records,² and succeeded in reversing a judgment rendered against him at Litchfield in 1763.³

The most influential Jewish family, however, in Connecticut, both during Colonial and Revolutionary times, were the Pintos. Isaac Pinto, of Stratford, figures as early as 1748,⁴ Jacob and Solomon Pinto were inhabitants of New Haven as early as 1759,⁵ and figure repeatedly in the court records between 1765 and 1773.⁶ One Jacob Simon (whom I cannot identify as a Jew) is mentioned as a Justice of the Peace in 1773 and 1775.⁷

The Jewish residents of Connecticut are found on the patriot side in the Revolutionary annals.⁸ In fact, when in

¹ Many other pronouncedly Jewish names appear in connection with New Haven during the Revolutionary Period. Thus in 1777, we find advertisements by Jacobs and Israel of New Haven. See *Conn. Historical Collections*, p. 179.

² *Colonial Records of Connecticut*. Vol. 11 (1757-62), p. 476. (October, 1760.)

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, pp. 225. (1762-67.)

⁴ *Colonial Records of Connecticut*. Vol. 9 (1744-50), p. 406.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 325. (1757-62.)

⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, (1775-6), pp. 68, 153, 154 (Pinto vs. Todd. Pinto vs. Kettletas). *Ibid.*, Vol. 13 (1768-72), pp. 37, 609. Vol. 14 (1772-75), pp. 68, 153-4. Vol. 15 (1775-6), p. 610. In 1776, Jacob Pinto was appointed to appraise land. Vol. 15, p. 350.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 15 (1775-6), pp. 10, 279. Also *The Part Sustained by Connecticut During the War of the Revolution*. Compiled by R. R. Hinman. Hartford, 1842, p. 28.

⁸ It may be interesting to note that while Silas Deane was delegate from Connecticut to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, he became quite intimate with Jews in that city. A Miss Levy figures repeatedly in his correspondence with his

August, 1776, Gershom Seixas, the patriot New York minister, induced his congregation to close the synagogue and remove rather than continue under British auspices, many of his flock went to Connecticut.¹ Solomon Simson, for instance, went to Danbury and there in 1780 was born his son Sampson Simson, the subsequent founder of Mount Sinai Hospital.² Solomon Hays, who also went to Connecticut, died there before the close of the war.³ Among the patriot refugees from Long Island we find Moses Simons,⁴ Aaron Isaacs and his son.⁵ Attention has been called by Mr. Kohler

wife and also in the correspondence of Samuel B. Webb. See *Conn. Hist. Society's Publications*. Vol. 2, pp. 176, 189.

Among the pronouncedly Jewish names in the Connecticut Revolutionary line, though they cannot be identified as Jews, are Solomon Jacobs, in Trumbull's Co., 1777. *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 220. Benedict Aaron (*Record of Services of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution*, compiled by authority of the General Assembly. Hartford, 1889, p. 453. Samuel Abraham, who was made prisoner by the British in 1781. *Ibid.*, p. 578. Daniel Manuel a corporal in 1776. *Ibid.*, p. 469.

¹See N. Taylor Phillips *The Levy and Seixas Families 4 Am.*, J. H. S. Publ., p. 205. Also paper by the present writer on "Gershom Seixas" in *Jewish Comment*, Baltimore, January 10, 1902. Also reprint in *Amer. Hebrew*, March 27, 1903.

²The father of Solomon Simson also went to Conn. and Ezra Stiles mentions visiting him in 1782. He describes him as aged 86, a refugee from New York, residing in Wilton in Norwalk, Conn. Stiles seems to have been intimate with the members of Simson's family and corresponded with them. See *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, edited with Notes, by F. B. Dexter, 3 vols., N. Y., 1901. Vol. II, p. 553. Vol. III, pp. 3, 32-3. Also *Ezra Stiles and the Jews*, by G. A. Kohut, pp. 106-7.

See also valuable sketch of *Sampson Simson*, by Hon. Myer S. Isaacs in *10 Am. J. Hist. Soc. Publications*, p. 110.

³This appears from an old MSS. a copy of which I obtained through the kindness of Dr. S. Solis Cohen, of Philadelphia.

⁴*New York in the Revolution* (Supplement), being a Compilation by Erastus C. Knight, Comptroller, Albany, 1901, p. 133.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 132.

to the fact that a daughter of Aaron Isaacs married out of her faith and her son was John Howard Payne, the composer of "Home, Sweet Home."¹

Most of the New York refugees went to Norwalk, probably because it already had a Jewish settlement.² Gershom Seixas himself when leaving New York took with him the sacred Scroll of the Congregation and settled in that town. There he remained until 1780.³ Benjamin Etting died at Norwalk in 1778.⁴

During the Revolutionary War the British made frequent raids on Norwalk. In October, 1777, we find a petition signed by its most prominent citizens addressed to the Council of Safety, reciting the fact that the British frequently enter the harbor, fire the houses of the patriots and plunder the community. Their efforts to guard their shores are also given in detail; their request is that "a well fitted vessel of about 8 guns may be purchased to cruise the sound as a protection to the shore." Among the signers to this petition are Myer Myers, Solomon Simson and Benjamin Jacobs, all well-known Jewish names.⁵

David Judah was a member of Capt. Gregory's company in the Connecticut Line as early as 1776.⁶

¹ *Some Early American Jewish Poets, Actors and Dramatists* (still unpublished).

² Some of the births and deaths of Norwalk Jews are recorded in the Record Book of Congregation Shearith Israel, of New York. Thus at p. 57 I find, "1776, born Rebeka, daughter of Myer Myers of Norwalk, Conn."

³ See *The Levy and Seixas Families*, by Hon. N. Taylor Phillips, *4 Am. J. H. S. Pub.*, p. 205.

⁴ Dr. S. Solis Cohen. *David Hays and Esther Etting* in *2 Am. J. H. S. Publ.*, p. 66.

⁵ *A Historical Collection from Official Records of the Part Sustained by Connecticut during the War of the Revolution*, compiled by Royal R. Hinman. Hartford, 1842, p. 598.

⁶ *Record of Service of Conn. Men in the Revolution*. Hartford, 1889, pp. 486, 724.

In 1777 Michael Judah petitions the Council of Safety for leave to bring a quantity of sugar from Rock Hill for the inhabitants of Norwalk, which is granted.¹

In 1779 appears an order to Joel Moor Clark, of "ye 2nd Co. of Alaram list in Sunbury," directing him to notify certain persons "to aquipt themselves with arms and acouterments and hold them in readeynes to march at ye shortest notice for ye defence of this state." Among those named is Juda Hays.²

The most important Jewish names in the Revolutionary annals of Connecticut are those of Jacob, Solomon and Abraham Pinto.³ Jacob Pinto appears to have been a member of an important political committee at New Haven in 1775.⁴

In 1776 the patriots of New Haven petitioned the Governor and Council of Safety for the removal of certain Tories. A portion of this petition is as follows: "We should esteem ourselves very unfortunate should we in our zeal for the preservation of our liberties entertain jealousies of any that are really friends of our country. We are every night exposed to be destroyed by our open enemies; our internal enemies, intimately acquainted with our harbors and our defenseless situation, can introduce themselves into our houses, can involve us, our wives and our little ones in ruin." The petition

¹ *A Historical Collection from Official Records of the Part Sustained by Connecticut during the War of the Revolution*, compiled by Royal R. Hinman, Hartford, 1842, p. 459.

² *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*. Vol. VIII, p. 203.

³ In the *Letter from the Secretary of War transmitting a Report of the Name, Rank and Line of every person placed on the Pension List pursuant to the Act of March 18, 1818*, Washington, 1820, Vol. 4, appear the following Jewish names as Revolutionary Pensioners in the Connecticut Line: Solomon Pinto, Ensign; Benjamin Hart, Private; Benjamin Aaron, Lieut. As to Jacob Pinto, see also *Colonial Records of Connecticut*, Vol. 15, p. 350.

⁴ See also *Connecticut Historical Collections*, by John W. Barber, New Haven, n. d., p. 176.

was granted and among its patriot signers were Jacob and Abraham Pinto.¹

Abraham Pinto was a member of the 10th Company, 7th Regiment of the Connecticut Line as early as 1775.² William Pinto, also of New Haven, and in all likelihood a brother of the foregoing, appears as a volunteer in 1779 and 1781.³

In connection with the attack on New Haven by the British, July 5 and 6, 1779, the records state that both Abraham and Solomon Pinto were among the wounded on the patriot side.⁴

The most conspicuous of the Pinto brothers, however, was Solomon Pinto, above referred to, who was an officer in the Connecticut Line. He was appointed ensign from civil life⁵ and served with distinction throughout the war. As a member of Captain Baldwin's company (2nd Regiment),

¹ *A Historical Collection from Official Records of the Part Sustained by Connecticut during the War of the Revolution*, compiled by Royal R. Hinman, Sec. of State, Hartford, 1842, p. 567. See also Peter Force's *American Archives*, 5th Series, Vol. 2, p. 375.

² *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution*, compiled by authority of the General Assembly. Hartford, 1889, pp. 84, 553, 746.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 631.

⁴ *The History of Connecticut*, by G. H. Hollister, New Haven, 1855. Vol. 2, p. 377.

Also *A Historical Collection, &c., of the part sustained by Connecticut, &c.*, by R. R. Hinman.

Also *Connecticut Historical Collections*, by J. W. Barber, p. 170, (mentions Abraham Pinto only).

See also *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, Vol. II, p. 365.

Also *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution*, compiled by authority of the General Assembly. Hartford, 1889, p. 553.

⁵ *Record of Service &c.*, p. 218. He also appears to have served as an officer in the 7th regiment, Connecticut Line.

1777-1781, he served to June, 1783,¹ when he "retired with the army."² Under the act of 1818 he subsequently became a pensioner.³

Solomon Pinto has the additional distinction of having been one of the original members of the Society of the Cincinnati in Connecticut,⁴ composed of meritorious Revolutionary officers. His name is appended to the original record now in possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

Turning now to the remaining New England States, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, investigation yields but slight results. Members of the Moses family,⁵ a name common throughout New England and one remotely of Jewish origin, are, it is true, met with in all three. None of these three States, however, had a Jewish community prior to 1800,⁶ though individual Jews seem to have traded there. In connection with Portland, Maine, mention is made in 1804 in a letter of Commodore Preble, of a Lieutenant Joseph Israel who fell before the walls of Tripoli,⁷ but there is nothing to show whether he was a Jew. In Maine the earli-

¹ *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution*, compiled by authority of the General Assembly. Hartford, 1889, p. 325.

² *Ibid.*, p. 360.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 636.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 373. The original record reads "Society of the Cincinnati. We the subscribers, officers of the American army do hereby voluntarily become parties to the foregoing institution and do bind ourselves to observe and be governed by the principles therein contained, for the performance of which we do pledge to each other our sacred honor."

⁵ Rev. M. T. Runnels. *History of Sanbornton, N. H.* Boston, 1881. Vol. 2, p. 527. With very few exceptions the name of *Moses* as a family name appears more extensively than other names in New England Records.

⁶ W. D. Williamson in his *History of the State of Maine*, Hallowell, 1832, in detailing concerning Religious Sects, makes no mention of Jews. The same is true of histories of New Hampshire and Vermont.

⁷ *The Maine Historical and Genealogical Recorder*. Vol. 7, p. 234.

est mention of a Jew was one Susman Abrams, a native of Hamburg, who settled there during the Revolutionary War and resided successively at Waldborough, Thomaston and for many years at Union, where he conducted a tannery.”¹

In Vermont in 1782 mention is made of one Benjamin Jacobs, who obtained permission to pass through Windsor on his way to Quebec to negotiate an exchange of prisoners.²

One interesting item in this connection is closely associated with the career of Alexander Hamilton. What is now Vermont had been claimed by New York throughout the entire Revolutionary period and this claim was strongly urged even after the war. In 1789 Hamilton inspired a movement to have New York relinquish its claims and have Vermont admitted as a separate State into the Union. For this purpose he obtained the co-operation of the most influential New Yorkers who were most heavily interested in Vermont lands and their petition on the subject was presented to the Legislature, February 13, 1789. I venture to give its opening paragraph:

“Memorial of John Jay and others to the Hon. the Legislature of the State of New York.

“That in the opinion of your memorialists the present situation of the district called Vermont and the peculiar disposition and circumstances of its inhabitants strongly oppose a re-union under the government of this State.

“That this consideration renders your memorialists exceedingly desirous to see proper and constitutional means taken for securing the said district into the American Confederacy as a free and independent State.

¹ John Langdon Sibley. *A History of the Town of Union in the County of Lincoln, Me.* Boston, 1851, pp. 110, 74, 127, 154. Abrams married a Christian woman and was a constant attendant at the Christian Church. He died in 1830 aged 87.

² *Records of the Governor and Council of the State of Vermont.* Vol. 2, p. 156.

“That although your memorialists are interested in lands in said district and have well founded claims on the justice of this State, yet they will be content to receive justice in any manner which the nature of the case and the situation of public affairs may point out as most expeditious.”

There are about sixty signatures to this petition, comprising the most representative names in New York. John Jay, Robert Troup, Thophilact Bache, and Alexander Hamilton. Among these we also find the name of Benjamin Judah.¹

The bill passed the Assembly but was defeated in the Senate and Vermont was not admitted until two years later.²

In New Hampshire the Moses and the Abrams family are constantly met with in the records and are classified by some writers as “Descendants of Jewish Christians.”

Of the former, the earliest mention occurs in 1693 when Aaron Moses, of New Castle, is referred to. Runnels in his history of Sanbornton, New Hampshire, indexes the Moses and Abrams families under the title “Jewish Descendants at Sanbornton.”³ He tells us that the Abrams family “as its name indicates is of Jewish origin,” and as tradition has it, is descended from two brothers “Christian Jews, who came from Palestine to New England at an unknown date, their names being William Abrams, who was a ship’s carpenter and fell into the sea and was drowned, and John, the other brother, who settled at Amesbury, Massachusetts.”⁴

Several other Jewish names appear in the early New Hampshire records. Thus in 1770 in the list of grants to

¹ *Records of the Governor and Council of the State of Vermont*, edited by E. P. Walton. Montpelier, 1875. Vol. 3, pp. 447-448.

² *Ibid.*

³ Runnels, Rev. M. T. *History of Sanbornton, New Hampshire*. Boston, 1881. See also *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 527, as to the Moses family.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 7. Runnels also states that the Abrams family by marriage is related to the family of General Putnam and of Daniel Webster.

settlers on the road between Wolfsborough and Leavits Town (Ossipee) Grant No. 11 was made to Joseph Levy¹ (the condition of these grants was that each settler had to give a bond for £30 that a house would be erected by him within a year).

Again in 1777 mention is made of William Levi of Somersworth as a private in the 2d New Hampshire Continental Regiment.²

The sole mention of a Jew as such in New Hampshire prior to 1800³ is that of Abraham Isaac, the Jew of Portsmouth, who settled there about the close of the Revolution and was exceedingly active in Masonic affairs.⁴ So appreciative is the account of him given in Brewster's History, that I venture to give it in full.

"Abraham Isaac and his wife were natives of Prussia and Jews of the strictest sect. They were the first descendants of the venerable Patriarch that ever pitched their tent in Portsmouth, and during their lives, were the only Jews among us. He acquired a good property and built a house on State street. Their shop was always closed on Saturday. Mr. Isaac died February 15, 1803, and on the stone which marks his grave in the North Burying Ground may be seen the following epitaph written by our poet J. M. Sewall:

"Entombed beneath where earthborn troubles cease
A son of faithful Abraham sleeps in peace;

¹ *State Papers of New Hampshire*, compiled by Albert Stillman Batchellor, Concord, 1896, Vol. 28, p. 138. Also *Masonian Papers*, Vol. 7, p. 96.

² *State Papers, &c. of New Hampshire*, Vol. 14, p. 615.

³ There appears express mention that there were no Jews in Portsmouth, N. H., in 1741-2. See *Historical Magazine*, edited by Dawson, June, 1870, Vol. 7, 2d series, p. 353.

⁴ *Town Papers &c., of New Hampshire*, compiled by Isaac W. Hammond, Concord, 1884, Vol. 13, p. 306. Abraham Isaac was among the Petitioners of St. John's Lodge, F. and A. M., of Portsmouth, N. H., for incorporation in 1799.

In life's first bloom he left his native air
A sojourner as all his fathers were.
Through various toils his active spirit ran,
A faithful steward and an honest man.
His soul, we trust, now freed from mortal woes
Finds in the patriarch's bosom sweet repose."¹

Sewall, the writer of the foregoing was one of the leading poets of the Revolution and his song "Vain Britons boast no longer," was sung in every camp throughout the country.²

¹ Charles W. Brewster. *Rambles about Portsmouth, N. H.* (2d Series), Portsmouth, 1869, p. 230.

See also same work. Portsmouth, 1859, p. 336.

Brewster also gives an account of the widow of Abraham Isaac and of her adopted son, who resided at New Ipswich, N. H. See *Ibid.*, 208, 230, 232 (2d Series, 1869).

² *Ibid.* (2d Series), Portsmouth, 1869, p. 232.

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